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SOCIETIES

ELEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION

THE eleventh annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association, held at Harvard University, December 27, 28, and 29, was remarkable in two respects: First, for what it purposed but did not accomplish; second, for the unmistakable promise of a new type of accomplishment at future sessions. A committee of five had, with elaborate care, formulated and defined the main issue for discussion, and this same committee, with the exception of the *ex officio* member, had undertaken to debate this issue. It was hoped that by this means the discussion would be so narrowed that it would result either in clearly defined agreement or in equally clearly defined disagreement. This hope was far from realized. The debate was not a sharp presentation of counter positions, but rather a presentation of the more or less complex and involved views of the individual debaters upon the various issues in question. The discussion which followed was hardly less nebulous. In great part it was a discussion of what the discussion ought to have been but was not. But out of the confusion and relative failure of the debate—the "riot of philosophic anarchy," as one of the members expressed it—the opinion strongly emerged that the method of debating a clearly formulated issue should by all means be continued as by far the most profitable mode of philosophic discussion. To that end, the committee of five was continued in office with instructions to draw up a plan for the next meeting along lines similar to those laid down for this year's meeting. It is to be hoped that the lessons of this year will aid the committee in outlining a plan such as will make possible both a sharper joining of issue and a clearer effort of cooperation.

The first paper of the session was read by Dr. Durant Drake on "What Kind of Realism?" Epistemological monism, he held, involves the giving up of the conception of a single temporal-spatial order into which all known facts fit; whereas the form of realism which accepts epistemological dualism can put all facts into one natural order, and is therefore in so far more plausible.

Professor Montague presented three objections to the panpsychist view of Dr. Drake: (1) The view offers no explanation of the mind's consciousness of other minds as such; (2) it does not justify the differences found in the forms of the external world; (3) it is a self-refuting system in so far as, taking its stand upon the facts of physics and physiology, it then informs us that these facts do not exist. Dr. Drake in answer found no difficulty in the view that minds are known as true parts of the natural world, but *under the form* of brain processes.

Professor Creighton followed with a paper on "The Determination of the Real World." This process of determination, he held, consists in following and interpreting the findings of experience, which involves the relation of a mind or consciousness to a real world of persons and things. To be a mind is just to stand in this relation of active appreciation and interpretation of real objects. If knowledge is genuine, the categories are constituent principles of things, as well as forms of mind. This makes unnecessary all attempts to get rid of knowledge in order to have the object in its purity. To report the nature of reality as a whole, a synthesis of results is needed, which can be achieved only by taking account of the processes of knowing through which the results of the special sciences are gained and reinterpreting these results and methods in the light of consciousness.

Professor Perry, in opening the discussion of the paper, charged the reader with begging the question in his statement that philosophy is the adoption of the standpoint of experience, meaning by experience that which involves the duality of subject and object. For in saying this Professor Creighton answers at the outset the question that is really most interesting to us. Furthermore, the assumption of subject-object duality is a dangerous one, in so far as it tends to make the two correlated terms final. Most of the difficulty, he asserted, arises out of the occupation with abstract terms rather than with concrete situations. Miss Calkins thereupon rose and added humor to the situation by expressing her delight at being at last in agreement with Professor Perry and admonishing him to forego his own evil way of using such abstract terms as R and S and O.

Professor Dewey seemed to find that Professor Creighton, after having declared mind to *be* a meaning and evaluation of existence, had substituted the declaration that it was a *principle* of meaning.

Professor Creighton, in replying, admitted frankly that he saw no way out of begging the question as to the initial duality of subject and real world. He failed indeed to see how the realists themselves could escape making the assumption.

Professor Lovejoy propounded two questions to Professor Creighton: (1) Whether he regarded the existence of the object in the experience relation as essential to the being of the object. To this Professor Creighton answered that he did so regard it in so far as the relation was internal. (2) If the object is, in this experience, truly revealed as it is, what does the object suffer if the consciousness is taken away? Professor Creighton answered: If one asks what would happen if my individual consciousness were withdrawn, the answer would be "nothing." But if one asks what would happen if all relation to any possible mind were withdrawn, the answer would be that no answer is possible.

Professor Marvin followed with a paper on "Dogmatism *vs.* Criticism." The present-day issue usually called that between realism and idealism should rather be named that between dogmatism and criticism. By criticism is meant the doctrine which asserts one or more of the following propositions: (*a*) The theory of knowledge is logically prior to all other sciences or to all other scientific procedure; (*b*) the theory of knowledge can ascertain the limits of the field of possible knowledge; (*c*) it can ascertain ultimately the validity of science and of the methods of science; (*d*) it can give us of itself certain fundamental existential truths usually called a theory of reality. In opposition, dogmatism asserts: (*a*) The theory of knowledge is not logically fundamental; it is simply one of the special sciences and logically presupposes the results of many other special sciences; (*b*) the theory of knowledge can not show except inductively and empirically either what knowledge is possible, or how it is possible, or again what are the limits of our knowledge; (*c*) it is not able to throw any light upon the nature of the existent world or upon the fundamental postulates and generalizations of science except in so far as the knowledge of one natural event or object enables us at times to make inferences regarding certain others. As a consequence of this difference in doctrine the realist has a very different interest in the theory of knowledge itself from that of the idealist. The conclusion to be drawn is that the name neo-dogmatism would be a far more appropriate name for the movement in opposition to idealism than the name neo-realism.

Miss Case, reverting to Professor Creighton's paper and referring to the call to "dogmatism," expressed her belief that every philosophic position is an attitude, an assumption, and therefore essentially and necessarily a begging of the question. Professor Creighton felt that a return to dogmatism would eliminate the characteristic quality of modern philosophy. Philosophy must have a criterion for distinguishing between true and false ideas, hence must be criticism. Professor Marvin, answering Miss Case, agreed that we must start with premises, but only as postulates, not as final truths. He summed up his position by asking whether the problem of how we know is to be made the great crucial problem in the theory of reality, or whether the sciences are to be permitted to forge ahead in their own way.

At the afternoon session, the debate proper on "The Relation of Consciousness and Object in Sense Perception" was begun. Professor Montague opened the debate with an impartial historical sketch of the development of the epistemological issue between realism and idealism in modern philosophy and then proceeded to develop his own argument in behalf of epistemological monism and realism. He held that the independent existence of perceived objects was evidenced by their behavior as common sense and science regard it, and in so far as physiological theories of perception imply the prior existence of the objects perceived. The ordinary objections to realism and the supposed axiomatic proof of idealism, he held, were based on a "verbal fallacy of psychophysical metonymy," *i. e.,* equivocal use of such words as "idea," "perception," "experience," to connote (1) the act or relation of thinking, perceiving, experiencing; (2) the thing or object thought of, perceived, experienced. While at the point of beginning the exposition of a new solution of the problem of error, Professor Montague was cut short by the time limit.

Professor Dickinson S. Miller followed with the second paper of the debate. In the first part of his paper he outlined certain well-known positions of idealism which he held must be dismissed. Proceeding to the consideration of neo-realism, he pointed out that the doctrine which neo-realism in the main defends is immediate or *so-called* naïve realism. (It is not real naïve realism, which is in fact a latent idealism.) But this species of presentative realism breaks down for three reasons amongst others: (*a*) the time taken in perception proves that the perceived object is not identical with the real object; (*b*) the fact of illusion proves that the perceived object is not identical with the real object; (*c*) the theory would oblige us to hold that when two people side by side look at the same object much of the object is actually present in these two fields of consciousness at once. In conclusion, Professor Miller held that an object can not become a content of consciousness *as an object.* Objectivity is by its very nature a matter of properties in the object that can not be revealed in one instant nor even in a minute span of time. Objectivity means a potentiality of certain further manifestations. A perception is an impression plus a readiness to behave in a certain fashion. Thus, an object can not, as such, be a given or "perceived" object.

Professor Lovejoy followed with a paper which concerned itself solely with the question of the validity of the historic discovery of the subjectivity of hallucinations, illusions, and dreams. While all typical new realists agree in denying that the objects and qualities presented in hallucination or illusory perception are "subjective existences" merely, they differ as to whether those objects are "real" or "unreal" (in the sense suggested by the committee).

Nunn, and apparently Alexander, and other English realists, declare that, *e. g.*, the "straight staff bent in a pool" does not "merely seem to be bent," but that it really "is bent." This view, which may be called absolute objectivism, appears to the writer the consistent one for this school to take. For the essence of the new realism is its conception of consciousness as an external and non-constitutive relation. But this conception implies that all objects and qualities actually presented in consciousness are, in a universal sense, real things in a real relation. But this consequence of the new realism requires us to assert contradictory predicates of the same object; to say that, *e. g.*, the staff in the pool is at once both straight and not straight. Unless absolute objectivism can give us a new theory of the logical relation of sensible "attributes" to the objects possessing them, this seems a fatal objection to that doctrine, and therefore to the relational theory of consciousness, and therefore to the new realism (*i. e.*, the combination of realism with epistemological monism).

Professor Thilly, in closing the debate, held that the answer to the question of consciousness as a factor in the perceptual situation which is given by radical realists follows necessarily from their naïve dogmatism: if the object perceived *is* the object unperceived, numerically identical with it, then there is no difference between the status of an object in a stream of perceptions and its status out of it. But here the biological theories of these thinkers suggest conclusions inconsistent with their radical premises. Physically and physiologically speaking, perception is the entire organism in interaction or relation with its environment; we can not single out any one particular element in the situation and call that the physical or physiological counterpart of the process of perception. No more can we, in speaking of perception as a mental event, abstract the so-called perceived object from the functions involved, in the hope that we may in this way get at the case of being, or discover the object exactly as it would be apart from any perceiver. We may say that in the perceptual situation an object is revealed, made manifest, but we may also say that much that appears belongs to the mental realm, is read into the object, sometimes truly, sometimes not. This does not mean that the mind alters the real object or that it creates an object out of nothing or that the object creates a picture of itself in the mind or that the object lies imbedded in the mind. All that we can say is that a conscious organism perceives a real object in a certain way, according to the mental and physical factors involved.

Professor McGilvary presented a close-packed ten-minute paper in which he argued, among other things, that the relational view of consciousness is compatible with the recognition that the same real object is in different consciousnesses; that an hallucinatory object occupies real space, but does not monopolize it; in other words, that impenetrability is not a universal characteristic of space-occupying things; that color-blindness is explicable on the relational theory of consciousness as due to the fact that the real brightness of a real object is selected to be a term of a consciousness relation, while the color of the real object is left out of the consciousness complex.

In the evening, the Harvard members of the Association entertained the visiting members at dinner at the Colonial Club. Professor Perry introduced President Lowell, who welcomed the Association with felicitous humor; to which President Woodbridge replied in happy vein. After the dinner a reception was tendered at the Harvard Union.

The session Thursday morning was opened by Dr. H. R. Marshall's paper on the general topic. Dr. Marshall argued that in his appreciation of a natural order as distinguished from a mental order, the natural man accepts naïvely a radical dualism. But further consideration indicates some manner of correlation between the two orders. Objects in the outer world may become images of the mental order by the loss of some certain characteristic, viz., that of "out-thereness." This suggests that the natural order may be really part of and within the mental order, a part which has this "out-thereness" characteristic, which the rest of the mental world has not. This view he would call introspective monism.

The meeting was then thrown open to general discussion. The prevailing note was one of criticism of the conduct of the debate. Mr. Pitkin expressed himself as grievously disappointed in so far as the specific empirical problems raised for debate had been passed over. No one had attempted to define accurately the term "numerical identity" contained in the first question propounded for debate. Numerical identity, he thought, might be defined in one of two ways, of which he felt that the latter would be the more profitable, viz., (1) identity with respect to quantity, or order, or place in a series; or (2) identity with respect to one value in a space, time, or other dimensional complex. With respect to the second question propounded, he felt that the result had been even less happy, by reason of the absence of any clear definition of "object" and "perception."

Dr. Cohen gave point to the discussion by disagreeing with Professor Miller that the neo-realist account of a stick appearing in water as bent was a self-contradiction. There was no reason, he held, why the same thing should not possess contradictory properties; it was only necessary that these should not be contradictory from the same point of view. With respect to a straight line, for example, there are an infinite number of points of view—length, angle, etc.—from which the line may be viewed. It is fallacious to suppose that the only relevant point of view is that of the observer. So the same stick may appear in a number of different combinations according as we take our point of reference. In short, then, the existence of a thing is a general formula for all possible points of view.

Dr. Spaulding followed Dr. Pitkin in the thought that the debate had failed to grapple with two essential issues: What is the difference between a primary quality when it is perceived and when it is not perceived; and what is the status of the entity which makes the difference? Professor Lovejoy, he felt, had attempted a reply by making consciousness the dumping-ground into which one put everything that one could not put into the real world. He urged that the Association proceed at once to the discussion of the two main issues. Whereupon Professor Warbeke, taking him at his word, with some humor, asked that Dr. Spaulding undertake what he had so wisely proposed. Dr. Spaulding, accepting the challenge, replied briefly that the brownness of the desk, for example, remains the same whether perceived or unperceived; that its perception, in short, consists simply in the desk's entering another relationship which does not alter or modify it. Professor Dewey felt that the main trouble with the discussion was due to the character of the committee's report, with which Professor Lovejoy took issue, declaring that the purpose of the committee was to call forth a consideration of a certain doctrinal combination, viz., epistemological monism and realism. Was this combination an internally consistent and tenable view? He had in his own paper, he said, proposed a test question: whether if you adhere to a relational theory of consciousness you can give any intelligible account of hallucinations and illusions. He felt that the neo-realist must, to be consistent, admit that hallucinations are real in the same sense as any other content. Professor Thilly expressed his disappointment with the discussion, asserting that the realist had no theory of perception, that he just took objects as they were. This he felt to be an utterly futile form of dogmatism.

Professor Perry urged that the real point at issue in the discussion was between monism and dualism, between the view, namely, that the difference between perceived objects and real objects is an absolute difference, a difference of substance, and the view that the difference was not an absolute one. In view of their common monistic tendency he felt that realists and idealists might form one party. Professor Marvin found that the chief shortcoming of the discussion lay in the confusion of meaning of "real" and "error." Real objects had been defined as true parts of the material world. But the confusion lay in defining material on the one hand in terms of abstract dynamics, and on the other in terms of concrete experience. With reference to "error," some of the speakers had seemed to look upon error as the act of assigning a particular content to the real material world or not so assigning it. On the contrary, he held, error lies rather in asserting a particular form of relation between one content and another which does not in fact obtain. Professor DeLaguna attempted by a concrete demonstration to indicate the difference which the scientist conceives between secondary and primary qualities. The scientist, he held, never expressed *what* the qualities were, but described them simply in terms of the test of double contact.

Professor Tufts felt that the test for a true object is a test by various sciences: what on the whole is the more permanent object, the one that we can do business with, etc.? It is obvious that we can not assert numerical identity between perceived and real objects in all cases. He wondered whether Professor McGilvary's view would imply that the same desk might be all the various possible shades of brown. Professor McGilvary answered Yes and No. If we mean by the question whether in the space in which we see the colors all colors are, we must answer yes; but in so far as they are in different relational contexts, we must answer no. It is by holding fast to distinctions of relational contexts that one avoids contradictions.

Miss Calkins, referring to Professor Marvin's paper, hoped that the realists would follow its suggestion that the task of philosophy was the logical criticism of scientific conceptions. She felt that realism must make its position good not simply by appealing to the sciences, but by actively entering upon the task of logical criticism of scientific conceptions and results. Miss Calkins felt that the real source of confusion among philosophers was their constant use of abstract terms, that is, terms like "table," etc., in which the self was abstracted from. Professor Norman Smith rose to criticize what seemed to be the aim of the whole discussion. It seemed to be arranged in such manner that agreement should be reached, as in the sciences. This, he felt, was seriously to confuse philosophic with scientific method. The question, What is the object when unperceived? Professor Smith thought to be a futile question. The real question that we should ask is, How do we *conceive* the object when unperceived?

Professor Dewey, reverting to the question of the bent stick and the apparent contradiction between its bentness and straightness, approved of Dr. Cohen's position. The difficulty, he thought, lay in treating the perception as *a* real object rather than as various systems of relations. The visual bentness of the stick, a real fact of optics, in nowise contradicts its tactual straightness. Professor

Perry, replying to Miss Calkins, saw no reason why "table" was an abstract term because the self was abstracted from. If this was so, the only way of being concrete was to talk about everything. Professor Creighton, in summing up the discussion, felt that there was need for some fundamentally new understanding of what body is. Professor Pitkin set the fundamental problem to be whether any function of a variable real should be regarded as a predicate of that real.

The afternoon session was opened with a paper by Professor G. R. Montgomery on "The Meaning of Evolution." Professor Montgomery pointed out the two meanings of evolution, (1) that which asserts merely a continuity of material and living objects; (2) that which regards the present as the unfolding of the past. He suggested that the word evolution should be restricted to the second, while a new word should be found to express the first meaning.

Professor Montgomery's paper was followed by a paper on "The Progress of Evolution" by Professor A. C. Armstrong. Considering the progress of evolution from the point of view of noetics, Professor Armstrong laid special stress upon the fact that the relation of the concepts of genesis, nature, and worth had not yet been adequately considered.

The last paper of the afternoon was by Professor I. Woodbridge Riley on "Early Evolution in America."

The discussion of these papers was desultory. At the adjournment of the session the business meeting convened. The following officers for the ensuing year were elected: president, Frank Thilly; vice-president, Norman Kemp Smith; secretary, Edward G. Spaulding; new members of the executive committee, W. B. Pitkin and E. A. Singer, Jr.

Professor Dewey read resolutions in memory of Professor James, which were adopted in silence by a standing vote. The question of the place of meeting for 1912 was referred to the executive committee with power, with the recommendation that the meeting be held at such a place as to make possible the attendance of Professor Bergson.

In the evening, Professor Woodbridge read his presidential address on "Evolution." As the address is to appear in full, it will be needless to summarize it in this place.

The last morning of the meeting was occupied with four papers, which must be summarized very briefly. Mrs. Christine Ladd-Franklin opened the session with a paper on "Existence in Logic," in which she maintained that modern logic had introduced (in the hands of Bertrand Russell) many vagaries which the philosopher will do well not to take too seriously. Thus to set up "*p* implies *q*" as the type of the logic process and to regard it as capable of throwing light upon problems is an error. It would be far better to take as the type-relation one of those in which the existence-term which is always present is present explicitly. After some discussion, Dr. Morris R. Cohen followed with a paper on "Mechanism and Causality in the Light of Recent Physics." The belief, he held, that all physical phenomena must be explicable in terms of mechanics rests as a matter of fact on the doctrine of the subjectivity of secondary qualities. Recent progress in physics seems to indicate that the laws of mechanics are not of universal application, *i. e.*, do not hold of very large velocities nor of very small bodies, and it may be necessary to base mechanics on electricity rather than electricity on mechanics. Distinguishing between mechanism and determinism, the paper went on to show that the statistical view of physics enables us to dispense with the notion of causality and to replace it with the wider and more definite idea of functional relation, in the mathematical sense, between phenomena. In the subsequent discussion with Professor Royce, Dr. Cohen insisted that the mathematical treatment of physical phenomena does not necessarily make them a part of mechanics. Professor Sheldon followed with a paper on "Chance," which aimed to show that chance, as an empirical concept, is just as real as cause, space, quantity, or other accredited scientific categories. The final paper of the morning was by Dr. Karl Schmidt on "The Nature and Function of Definition in a Logical System," in which the writer maintained, as against the ordinary modern accounts of definition, that definition is of indispensable use in a deductive system because it introduces into that system the "new." Professor Royce spoke briefly in approval of Dr. Schmidt's view. After some brief discussion by Mrs. Franklin, Dr. Cohen, and Professor Royce, the meeting adjourned.

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REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

Influencing Men in Business. WALTER DILL SCOTT. New York: The Ronald Press. 1911. Pp. 168. $1.00.

This readable little book contains an analysis, in popular language, of typical processes of choice and action, and a comparison of argument and suggestion as means of influencing conduct. Simple business situations are cited in which each of the two methods of appeal is most likely to meet with success. The ideo-motor character of suggestion is emphasized and illustrations of both argument and suggestion, drawn from